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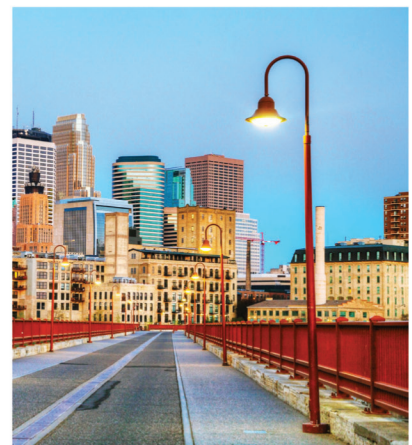
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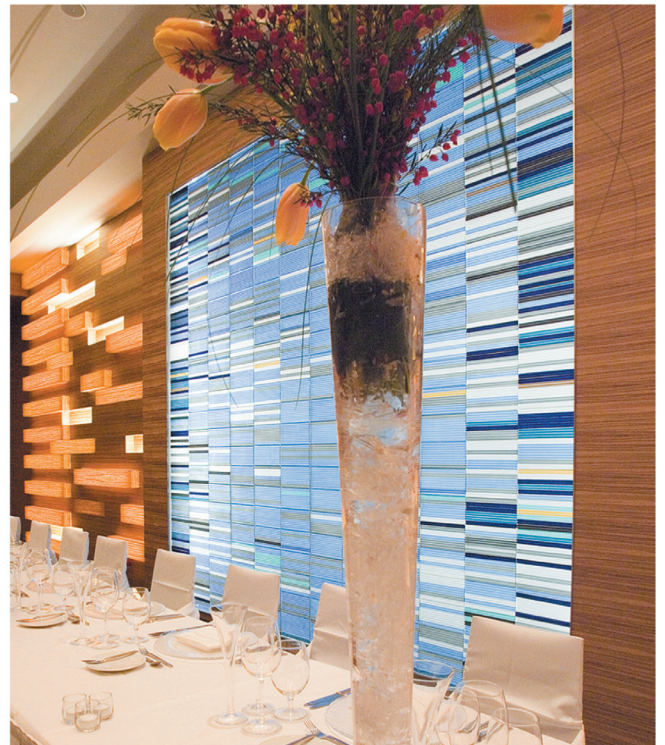
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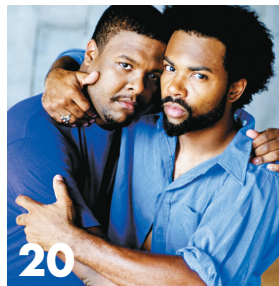
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ON THE COVER

Our commemorative 500th Issue celebrates the 2014 Pride in Pictures. Our community, our Pride, our 500th magazine. Photo by Sophia Hantzes

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CONTRIBUTORS



E.B. BOATNER



PAT EVANS



KATHLEEN
WATSON



ED HUYCK



ELLEN KRUG



JUSTIN JONES



CARLA
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Editorial

Managing Editor Andy Lien 612-436-4671

Editorial Assistants Linda Raines 612-436-4694,
Shane Lueck 612-436-4692

Editor Emeritus Ethan Boatner 612-436-4670

Editorial Associate George Holdgrafer 612-436-4672

Copy Editor Bridget Rocheford-Kearney

Contributors Pat Evans, Nell Gelhaus, Ed Huyck, Justin Jones,
Ellen Krug, Shane Lueck, Brandon McCray, Steve Lenius,
Jennifer Parello, John Townsend, Randy Stern, Joy Summers,
Carla Waldemar, Kathleen Watson

Advertising

Sales & Advertising Director Barry Leavitt 612-436-4690

Senior Account Executive Suzanne Farrell 612-436-4699

Account Executives Robert Felton 612-436-4697, Richard
Kranz 612-436-4675, Anton Reichl 612-436-4695

Advertising Associate George Holdgrafer 612-436-4672

Sales & Advertising Traffic Coordinator

Linda Raines 612-436-4694

Sales Appointments Michelle Ulmer 612-436-4693

Classifieds Suzanne Farrell 612-436-4699

National Sales Representative Rivendell Media
212-242-6863

Creative

Creative Director Hubert Bonnet 612-436-4678

Graphic Designer Mike Hnida 612-436-4679

Photographer Sophia Hantzes

Lavender Studios Hubert Bonnet, Mike Hnida,
Austin Lindstrom

Administration

Publisher Lavender Media, Inc.

President & CEO Stephen Rocheford 612-436-4665

Vice President & CC Pierre Tardif 612-436-4666

Chief Financial Officer Carolyn Lima 612-436-4664

Administrative Assistant Austin Lindstrom 612-436-4661

Founders George Holdgrafer, Stephen Rocheford

Inspiration Steven W. Anderson (1954-1994), Timothy J. Lee
(1968-2002), Russell Berg (1957-2005), Kathryn Rocheford
(1914-2006), Jonathan Halverson (1974-2010), Adam
Houghtaling (1984-2012), Walker Pearce (1946-2013)

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Lavender Media, Inc.

3715 Chicago Avenue S., Minneapolis, MN 55407

LavenderYellowPages.com

612-436-4660 **Office**

877-515-9969 **Toll Free**

612-436-4685 **Fax**

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The New Normal

Lavender's first issue was published in June of 1995. In purple and black ink on newsprint paper, the background images include some gender nonconforming folks, a drag queen, some women practicing martial arts, and people wearing what appear to be political buttons. The cover story asked "What's NORMAL, Anyway?" which deconstructed how various community members felt about the term "normal" in 1995. 499 issues later, we still don't have that answer. What is normal? What's the norm? Who wants to be normed?

Depending on your perspective, everything and nothing is normal. The norm may be conformity or "passing" or staying in the closet or appearing heterosexual in one's homosexuality; it also may be good or bad, depending on who craves or rejects being normed. Who is belonging to what and at what cost? Or, as this community can relate, who is excluded from what and at what cost? What we've done for 500 issues is present countless images and stories about what a new normal can look like, a normal that is inclusive; a normal that can be exemplified by the image on our cover. From marriage rights to families to arts to sports to news to religion to the various groups within this community, *Lavender* presents the community to itself as well as to the larger society.

What's normal, anyway? It's up to you, which is why our job is to amplify the messages, stories, and images of this community. Giving more information about this community allows those within—as well as those who don't identify as part of the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender, or Allied community—ways to find what is relevant and resonant within their own lives. Ways to relate, ways to empathize, ways to redefine "normal."

How have we done this? *Lavender* Media encompasses more than the 500 issues you may have held in your hands over the past 19 years; it also includes a substantial online presence with multiple websites, videos, podcasts, and our social networking messages, as well as frequent and popular events like First Thursdays around the Twin Cities. As an independently gay-owned and -operated business, *Lavender* is a debt-free publication that has seen great growth, both locally and regionally (and globally, considering that ¾ of our audience is reading us online, for free). *Lavender* serves the community by being accessible to all. Our

commitment to excellence, sound business model, and quality employees have allowed us to use technology to expand our reach with each passing year.

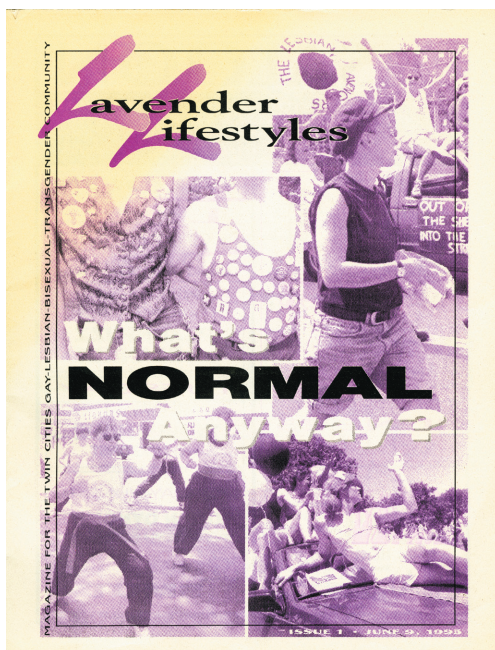
Lavender Magazine is available at over 900 distribution sites, every two weeks; *LavenderMagazine.com* hosted a quarter of a million unique users last year; *BigGayNews.com* has over 61,100 Twitter followers (@BigGayNews) and is published in 12 languages (English, French, Spanish, Czech, Greek, Korean, Chinese, Russian, Portuguese, Italian, Dutch, and German); over 16,000 people have free subscriptions to *Lavender* via Newsstand on iPads and iPhones; *Lavender* has over 3,800 Twitter followers (@lavmag) and more than 5,500 "Likes" on Facebook; all of *Lavender's* advertisers get increased online and mobile visibility on our Friends of Community Map (FOCMap.com) platform each year; and our breadth and depth only continues to grow. Simply put, *Lavender* Media has been presenting the world with a new normal for going on 20 years.

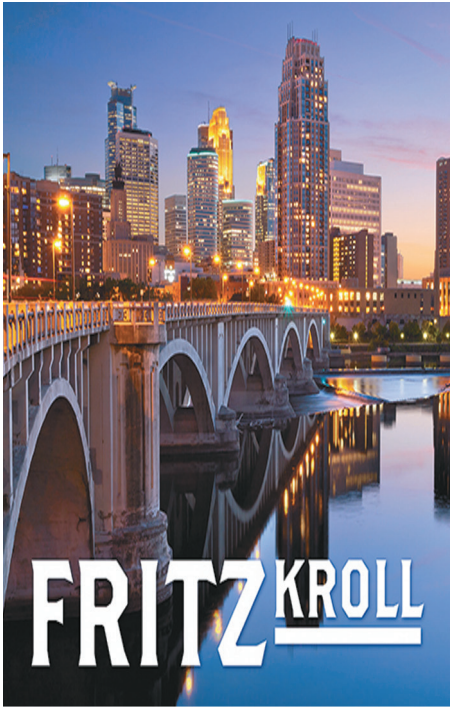
The new normal is well illustrated by the members of our community on the cover of this commemorative issue. But, any one of the photos in this issue could've been considered a cover photo for the new normal, as each is a snapshot of our community in the Twin Cities. We may not consider ourselves to be similar to all of the people in these pages, but we're all in this community together. It's a beautiful thing, acceptance. Being open to who can be a member of our club is just as important as what it's like for this club to be accepted by the larger society in which we're all already a part, as citizens in our towns, states, and country. In this case, the smiling trio wearing the "Love makes a family" t-shirts tells us that not only do they belong in our community, but that more than what's been considered "normal" can make a family. Love makes a family: love of partners, friends, pets, teammates, coworkers, doorknockers, congregants...our families of choice, rather than families of relation, are just as normal as any family.

So, thank you for letting us continue to present to the world what the rainbow community in the Twin Cities is: the new normal. ■

With you and with thanks,

Andy





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OUR LAVENDER

A WORD IN EDGEWISE | BY E.B. BOATNER

Here's To Many, Many More!

It seems only yesterday I wrote my first piece for *Lavender* number 152. Now, in the blink of an eye, it's the magazine's milestone 500th issue!

Of the many things I could relate about my *Lavender* experiences from April, 2001, to July, 2014, the most important and affecting have been the opportunities afforded me to encounter people and events that might otherwise not have crossed my radar. Take the magical evening of Hennepin Theatre Trust's annual *SpotLight Showcase* we attended June 8 at the Orpheum Theatre. The SpotLight Musical Theatre Program, now in its ninth year, is open to any Minnesota public, private, or parochial school, and features the talents of some 5,400 students from 67 participating Minnesota high schools.

The atmosphere in the Orpheum that night was electric; cheers, photographs, a susurrant of teenage (and adult) theater energy. We sat next to proud parents whose freshman son was in the chorus of Eagan High School's production, *All Shook Up*; together with the other parents, friends, and relatives, they cheered as they saw their kids' hard work coming to fruition.

And work it is. Not only the original show, produced and performed

during the school year, but now, a full week at the Orpheum, practicing the medleys and routines for tonight's big show. Musicals are intricate, collaborative efforts, involving many more individuals than are seen on the stage. They, too, were honored, the techies, lighting and sound technicians, assistant directors, choreographers, set and costume designers, stage managers—the unseen multitudes who erect the armature upon which a musical is built.

From my arrival in Minneapolis back in December of 2000, through my assignments at *Lavender*, I knew I was blessed to be in a veritable Land of 10,000 Theaters. I was privileged to be able to see many marvelous shows. But while marvelous shows are, well, *marvelous*, this recent glimpse of the Hennepin Theatre Trust's SpotLight Program made me realize just how deep is their commitment, not only to bringing superb theater to the Twin Cities, but to enabling Minnesota youth to flourish and become the theater forces of the future.

And so, continuing on to the magazine's future, issues 501 and beyond, I look forward to enjoying yet further new *Lavender*-borne adventures and revelations. ■



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Quinoa is one of the staples on Marin's menu. It is great simply seasoned with a little ginger and lemon or you can turn it into a cold salad with fresh tomatoes, olives and fresh herbs. Some guests even order it alone as a snack. Come in and try it, sitting on our Hennepin Avenue patio with a summer cocktail, wine or craft beer.



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A Reflection on Two Decades

Lavender Celebrates 500th Issue and 20th Year

For any publication, its 500th issue and 20th year are certainly reasons to celebrate. *Lavender's* current issue is number 500, and the magazine began its 20th year in early June. It's a time to look back on two glorious decades in our publication's history.

In the spring of 1995, *Lavender* cofounders Stephen Rocheford and I set out to launch a magazine that would both serve the Minnesota GLBT community and remain financially viable for the long term. Our mission statement reflects that goal: "To appeal to the greatest number of Minnesota GLBT readers, and direct them to our advertisers." The first issue of *Lavender* debuted on June 9, 1995. We chose the publication's name because the color lavender has always been associated with GLBT folks for time immemorial, as Judy Grahn points out in her classic *Another Mother Tongue: Gay Words, Gay Worlds*.

From the early 1970s to 1995, some 25 local GLBT publications appeared and then disappeared. Most notably, the newspapers *GLC Voice*, *Equal Time*, and *Gaze* each lasted for about a decade. Continuing this trend, some ten publishing ventures suffered the same fate after 1995. Across the United States, too, a bevy of national and local publications has gone under in that time frame.

On the other hand, *Lavender* has thrived for two decades because it has been financially stable from the outset, thanks to the tremendous support of a host of advertisers over the years. In addition, *Lavender's* magazine format has proved to be popular with readers and advertisers, in contrast with the newspapers of yesteryear.

Lavender has continually improved the look of the publication since 1995. In 1998, it started to use full color throughout, and in 2005, it began to print on all glossy paper. Plus, the magazine's design has frequently

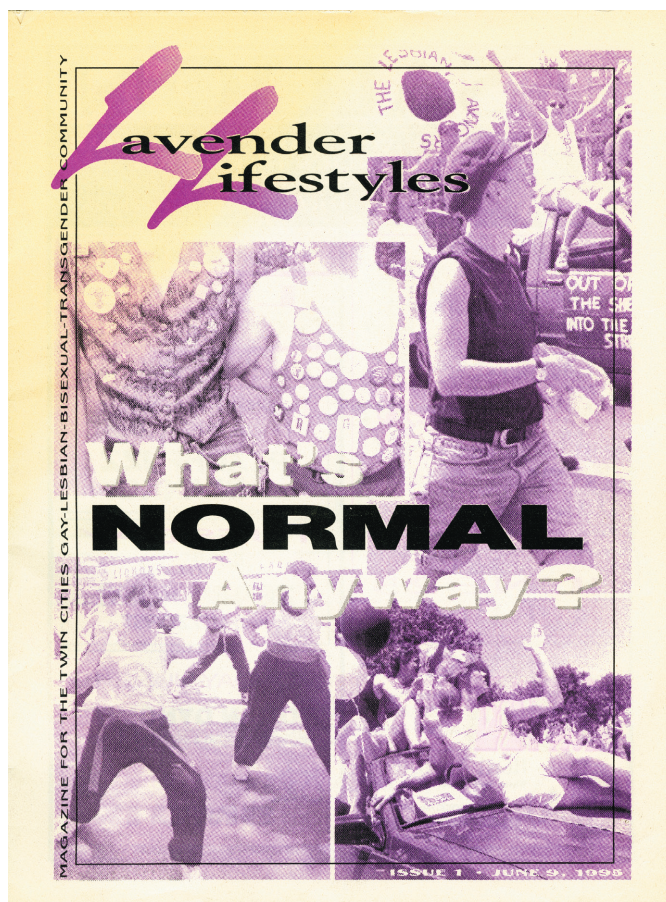
been enhanced. Along with its look, *Lavender* has offered a superlative cornucopia of content of interest to readers in the GLBT community and its allies. The print magazine is available at more than 900 distribution sites locally and regionally. As well, *Lavender's* growing online offerings reach many thousands of additional readers.

The backbone of *Lavender's* success has always been the people who have put together the magazine every other week for 500 issues. The present staff includes the following six (listed by their name, their position, and the year they joined the publication) who, along with the cofounders, have been with *Lavender* for a decade or more: Barry Leavitt, Sales & Advertising Director (1999); Pierre Tardif, Vice President and CC (1999); Carolyn Lima, Chief Financial Officer (2001); Sophia Hantzes, Photographer (2000); Suzanne Farrell, Senior Account Executive (2001); Hubert Bonnet, Creative Director

(2004); and Austin Lindstrom, Administrative Assistant (2004). In addition, contributors Steve Lenius and John Townsend have been with the magazine from the first issue, and contributor Carla Waldemar came on board in 2001. However, a host of other staff and contributors has brought *Lavender* to the GLBT community over the past two decades.

When *Lavender* debuted in 1995, same-sex marriage was just emerging as the key issue for the Minnesota GLBT community. Now, things have come full circle with the Minnesota Legislature's enactment of same-sex marriage last year. And *Lavender* will be there to inform our readers about future developments for GLBT people and allies.

Given *Lavender's* present strong position, in line with the vision of cofounders Rocheford and me, the magazine's future looks bright indeed. We thank our readers and advertisers for helping us to reach our historic 500th issue and 20th year. ■



OUR LAVENDER

"BEAR" WITH ME (WHILE I TELL YOU ABOUT)... |

BY BARRY LEAVITT

PAWS ON GRAND

August 3 • 11am-4pm

Grand Avenue • St. Paul

It's our Summer Pride in Pets issue, so I need to include at least one pet event. Celebrate the dog days of summer on St. Paul's Grand Avenue with Paws on Grand! Grand Avenue businesses partner with local rescue groups to pamper and celebrate four-legged friends all along the Avenue. Gather up giveaways, relax on a pet-friendly restaurant patio, learn about pet adoption, support rescue groups, and pose for the popular pet photo contest! Visit www.grandave.com/events/paws-grand for more information.

SOAP BOXING – EROTICA SLAM

August 4 • 8pm

Camp Bar • 490 N. Robert St., St. Paul

The St. Paul Soap Boxing Poetry Slam is one of the few slam communities to have not only won the National Poetry Slam, but to have won it twice (2009 & 2010). The Soap Boxing Poetry Slam is the home to some of the best spoken word & performance poetry in the country. It consistently delivers an intense and moving experience and is a hub for one of the most vibrant artistic communities in Minnesota. Visit www.camp-bar.net for more information.

TOM GOSS LIVE

August 8 • 9pm

Mattie's on Main • 43 Main St. SE, Minneapolis

Tom Goss, DC based singer-songwriter whose pop/rock style and sensitive spirit has earned him a growing national following, is returning to Minneapolis. His 3-day Midwest tour comes on the heels of his new album release, "Wait". Music videos are an integral part of Tom's work, and his last release, "Bears," which is a whimsical take on his self-professed infatuation with Bears, received millions of hits internationally. His most recent release, "Illuminate the Dark", is about seeing people without judgment. It stars Iraq veteran, amputee and now model, Alex Minsky, as well as transgender performer, Joelle Baya-Uzuri. Visit <http://mattiesonmain.com/event/tom-goss/> for more information. ■



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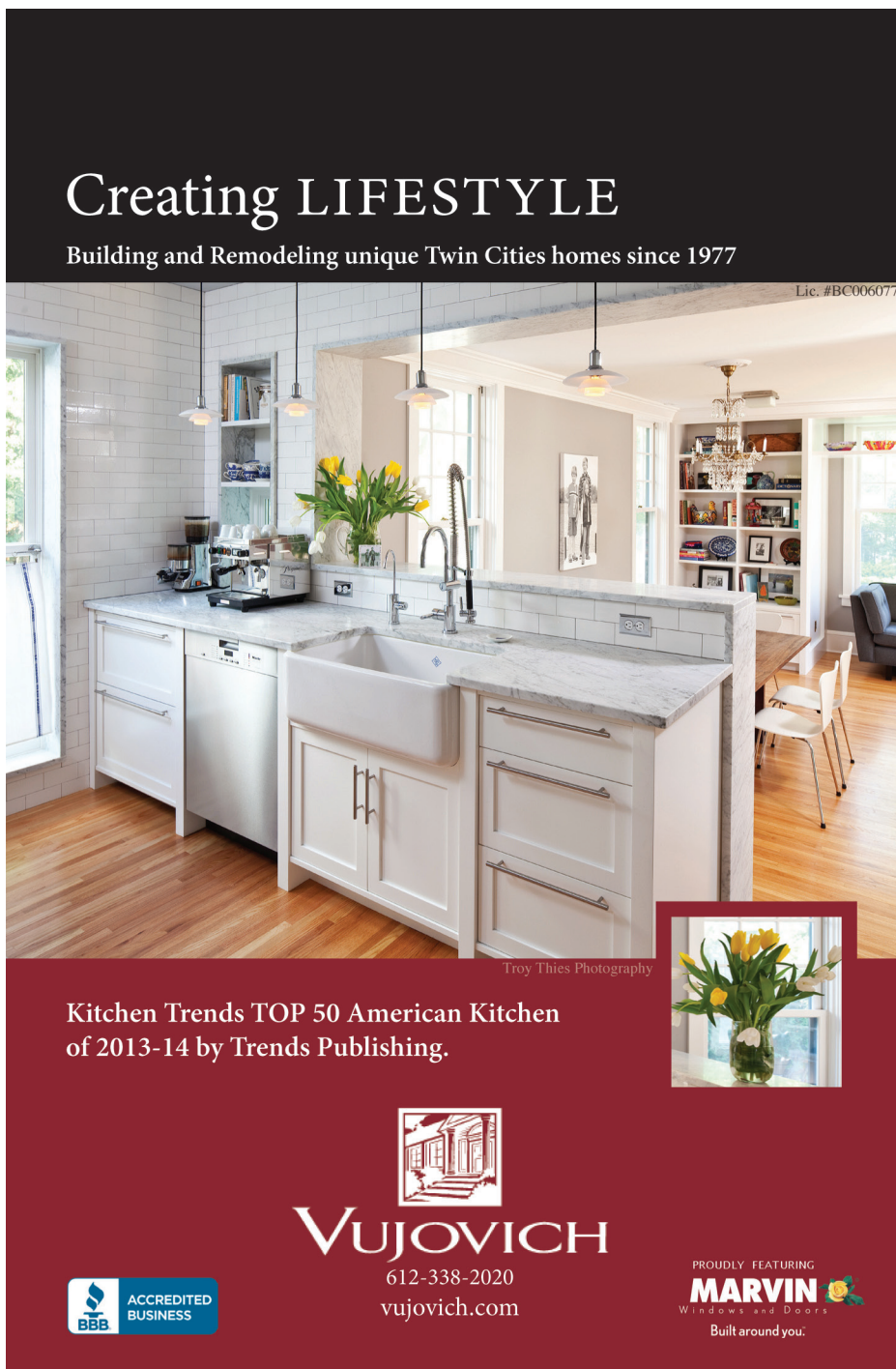
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SEASONS OF CHANGE

Looking Back at Performing Arts & the Evolution of a Community



The Full Monty. Photo by Michal Daniel

I have written for *Lavender* ever since the beginning when it was *Lavender Lifestyles* and the landscape was very different. Looking back it was about navigating shifts of consciousness, community divisions, and learning curves, including my own. Transgender issues were only just beginning to gain acceptance among gays and lesbians. Much of the community was still ghettoized and not living comfortably outside “safe zones.” Bi and gay men were still irrationally thought to be pedophiles by an ignorant critical mass of the population. The terms “dyke” and “breeder” were more commonly used within the community than they are now.

The previous publications I had written for, termed “gay and lesbian” publications, were packed with reportage on HIV/AIDS but as *Lavender* came into being we were seeing that the activism of the previous decade had resulted in significant improvements in treatment and life longev-

ity. It was also a time when Senator Jesse Helms (R-NC) had activated a strong anti-queer and anti-feminist crusade to dismantle the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), in which Minneapolis arts organizations such as the Walker Art Center and Patrick’s Cabaret were caught in the crossfires of. The Walker’s John Killacky and the Cabaret’s Patrick Scully were controversial figures both locally and nationally. Killacky invited me, as a journalist, to his office to watch a video of Rush Limbaugh’s attack on the Ron Athey controversy that originated at Patrick’s Cabaret.

It was also a time of face-off between the anti-pornography feminism of Andrea Dworkin and Catherine MacKinnon v. an emerging sex-positive feminism of libertarian feminists bonded with a new generation of women. Both Dworkin and MacKinnon had local support, but then veteran gay activists like Phil Willkie, Dean Amundson, and David Thorstad formed strong bonds to counter that. If you wonder why gay

Two Queens One Castle, Take Me Out.

Photo by Ann Marsden



I am My Own Wife. Photo by Michal Daniel

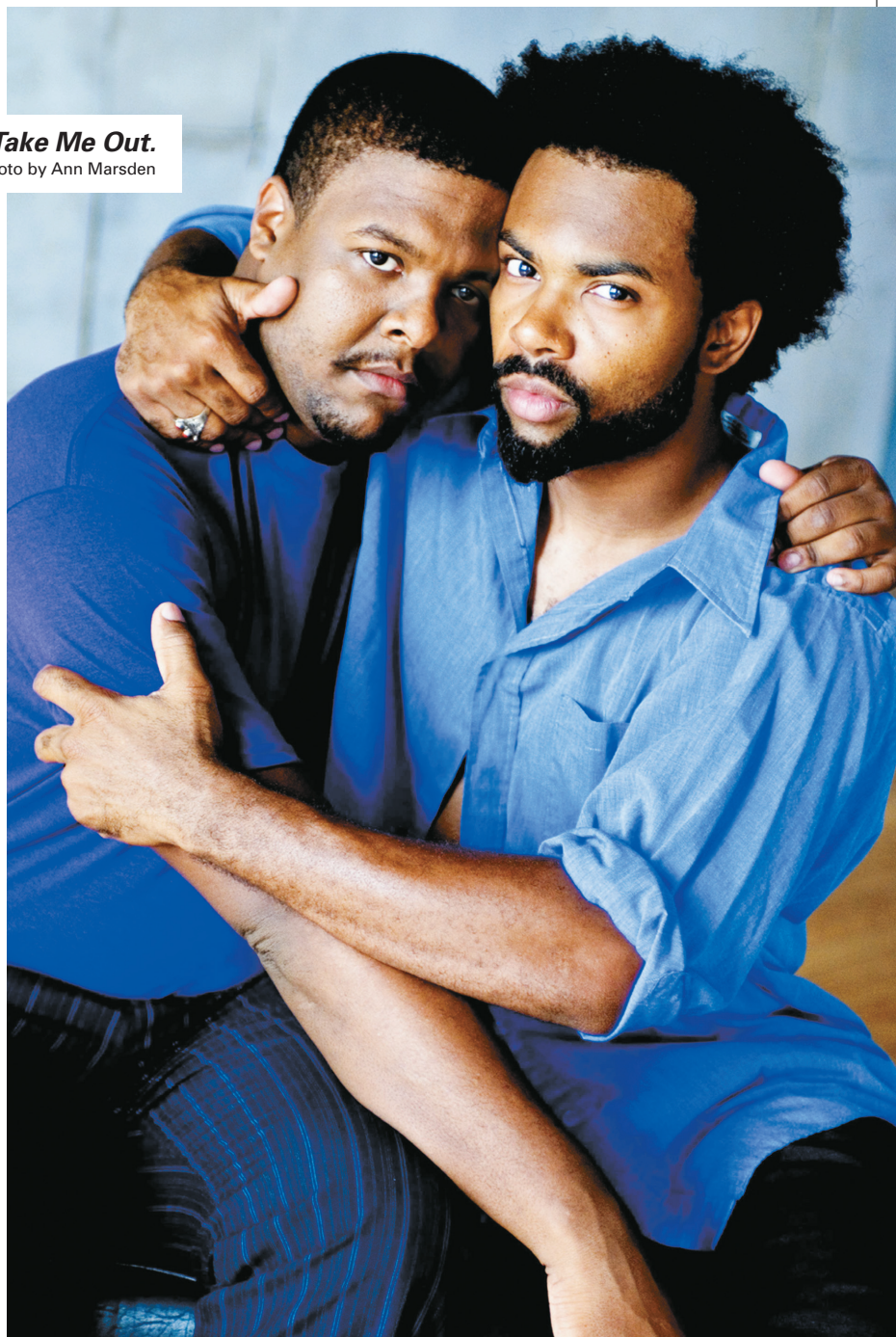
and bi men were so involved with this issue it's because of the historical connection the gay movement had—and continues to have—with the women's movement and the necessary libertarian streak that gay men and lesbians had to champion because of being targets of privacy rights invasions and right to free expression.

There had also been a fractured relationship with transgender people because of definitions of just what that could entail, as well as certain feminists who aggressively challenged transgender people's rights to be identified as actual women, and who held drag to be misogynistic. That was exacerbated by gay men who misguidedly blamed MTFs for promoting negative gay stereotypes. FTMs were somewhat below the radar at that time. Obviously, much education was in order just for the community itself, let alone, the mainstream.

However, given all this, the GLBT movement miraculously moved forward to become an unprecedentedly successful civil rights movement. Minneapolis-St. Paul has long been—and still is—a mecca for GLBT acceptance as well as a longtime mecca for performing arts. That dual forward motion of both is the context I came into. I tended then to focus on performance work with queer content, feminist work, work that looked into the nature of sexuality of various kinds, and that written by gays and lesbians even if it wasn't specifically queer. That's still my baseline. Though I go beyond all that, too.

Writing for *Lavender* compelled me to consider both the content and the quality of queer performance work as well as public attitudes around it. My first big series was on the NEA fracas, titled *Hunting Down the Homos*. I raged against Helms and his neocon media pals but also chafed at how “queer” (a term just coming into serious usage) and feminist-centered work were being singled out more than race-oriented work was. That said, though I deemed freedom of expression was fundamental, I cautioned against artists going out of their way to transgress for the sake of transgressing, especially on the public dime.

I would go on to credit groups like Illusion, Mary Worth, and Jungle Theaters, the Ordway, Frank and Pillbury House Theatres, Hennepin Theatre Trust, Brave New Workshop, Red Eye, Eye of the Storm, The-



atre Unbound, Theater Latté Da, and Minneapolis Musical Theatre for presenting work that, in effect, synthesized the concerns of the performance art that the Helms crowd ranted against, by shaping them into larger, better-conceived theatrical structures. However, it was Outward Spiral Theater Company (which followed Unicorn Theatre, as the area's primary gay and lesbian theater group) that merits special credit for bringing so many well-written plays about queer experience with stand-out productions of *Dog Opera* and *In the Garden*.

Something splendid was also happening at major mainstream houses. Plays dealing with queer subject matter were being produced for the larger audience. The Guthrie: *Racing Demon*, *Thief River*. Mixed Blood: *Two Queens One Castle, Take Me Out*. History Theater: *Farm Boys*. Park Square: *Love! Valour! Compassion!* Theatre in the Round: *Jeffrey*. Penumbra Theatre, Pangea World Theater, Minnesota Jewish, and Mu Performing Arts also got on board. Evolution was happening in a very natural way.

Dance companies also put out work that was pushing queer but-

CONTINUED ON PAGE 22 ➔

Redhaired Death 2. Photo by Peter Vitale

tons: Ballet of the Dolls, Arena Dances, James Sewell Ballet, and Hijack, just to name a few. Bedlam Theatre and Intermedia Arts expressed avant-garde concepts that pushed the androgynous envelope. Queer content has also emanated from dance and theater at every single Minnesota Fringe Festival since its beginning. I was there!

I also have had the honor of interviewing great minds: intersex expert, Sharon Preves; directors Stephen Daldry and Ang Lee on the very day *Brokeback Mountain's* Golden Globe nominations were announced; Bi Cities co-hosts Margaret Charmoli and Anita Kozan; Ordway President Kevin McCollum; Donna Summer in what was a kind of olive branch to gay men and the lovely Cyndi Lauper; activist author Judy Shepard; Guthrie Artistic Director Joe Dowling, who I see as profoundly instrumental in bringing both multicultural and queer consciousness to nation's flagship regional theater; filmmaker John Cameron Mitchell on his sexual gem, *Shortbus*; sex columnist Dan Savage; cultural critic Camille Paglia; porn star Blue Blake; public policy expert Wally Swan; playwrights Edward Albee (twice), Marsha Norman, David Henry Hwang, Tony Kushner, and Doug Wright; radio hosts Thom Hartmann and studly Mike Malloy; comedians John Fugelsang, Hal Sparks, Joan Rivers, and naughty Lisa Lampanelli. Was she ever a trip!

On the other hand, I covered politics and religion with interviews with (then) Democratic Senator Mark Dayton and former Republican Governor Arne Carlson. I focused on Muslim issues, my most urgent one involving a man requiring asylum because he couldn't return to Egypt for fear of torture and death for being gay. When Target corporation was under fire for contributing to an antigay political group I approached its corporate firewalls to get some explanation. They were resistant but that in itself was a story. I also approached the Pride Committee about its Target connection.

However, the political/religious issue I'm am proudest of is my overview of the persecution of GLBT citizens in Uganda. I think I can say that it remains a comprehensively informative explanation of the roots of the tyranny that has since worsened and clearly indicates the role of wealthy white American evangelical efforts in worsening the situation. I got a supportive response from US Representative Betty McCollum and was stonewalled by US Representative Michele Bachmann.

My Uganda pieces are not my only Christian-based articles. In 2012 I wrote a piece on Archbishop John Nienstedt shortly before the defeat of the constitutional amendment banning same sex marriage. And of course, I am most famous and infamous for my investigative reporting on Lutheran Pastor Tom Brock. I was denounced by the *New York Times* and Silha Center Director Jane Kirtley at the U of M (my *alma mater*)

but I still received overwhelming responses of thanks and support, locally and nationally, for which I will always be grateful. *Lavender* owner Stephen Rocheford's clear-headed interchange with Kirtley on TPT's *Almanac* was priceless. I think the whole situation helped forward the discussion on the travesty of "reparative therapy."

Since then, my focus has been more on performing arts and film. I've observed how 20% Theatre Company Twin Cities and Gadfly Theatre have been combining both genderqueer radical performance art and serious plays. And there are small theaters doing topnotch classic work by gay playwrights like Tennessee Williams and Oscar Wilde and newer plays with queer content. These include Candid Theater, Torch, Gremlin, Dark & Stormy, Nimbus, Walking Shadow, and Theater Coup d'Etat.

It's soothing to see how what was so controversial two decades ago has to a great degree been integrated into the larger public consciousness. Yet there are new issues that can—and are—being grappled with in local performing arts. And it's stunning to see how what you thought was going to be a dusty old classic—*A Streetcar Named Desire* or *My Fair Lady* at the Guthrie, *An Ideal Husband* by Walking Shadow or *The Heiress* at the Jungle—resurges synchronistically to the present with a freshness that is as immediate as the air you are currently breathing. ■



Cat on a Hot Tin Roof. Photo by Michal Daniel

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Small But Mighty, the Staff of Lavender Media Reflects on 500 Issues

One of the most important pieces of a publication is the masthead. It tells everyone who works for the publication, what roles they play, how to contact them, as well as other pertinent information, such as inspirational people who have passed on but remain on the masthead with our respect. Each issue of the past 500 is produced every two weeks by a small but mighty crew. To us, it's our job: we show up, suit up, and get the job done. Rarely does the light shine on the people who make it happen, whether making sure our First Thursdays run as they should; answering the phone as the

first point of contact with the public; coordinating and selling ads to make sure our publication stays in business; managing the financial matters of a business in its 20th successful year; conceptualizing and designing innovative and appealing layouts; putting the talent and vision into the ads and photography of both the magazine and the website; researching, podcasting, posting, and tweeting Big Gay News every day; as well as coordinating stories, photo shoots, and contributors. So much is done by so few. Here are the reflections of the staff of Lavender Media regarding 500 Issues:

STEPHEN ROCHEFORD

President and CEO

Start Date: May 1, 1995

First Issue: 1

Thoughts on 500 Issues:

"Incredible that we made it this far."



BARRY LEAVITT

Sales & Advertising Director

Start Date: April 12, 1999

First Issue: 102

Thoughts on 500 Issues:

"As the saying goes, time flies when you're having fun. Issue 500 is my 399th issue with *Lavender*, and it's been amazing to work here during a time of so many wonderful changes and achievements within the GLBT community. I'm proud to work with so many talented people who pour their hearts into creating a publication that is often cited by people around the country as a gold standard for local GLBT publications. Here's to the next 500!"



PIERRE TARDIF

Vice President and CC

Start Date: June 14, 1999

First Issue: 106

Thoughts on 500 Issues:

"I'm very proud of the *Lavender* staff members who have conceived the magazine over the years. I feel extremely fortunate



to have worked with such talented individuals. Minnesota's community is beautiful, vibrant, and thriving, and the award-winning magazine simply mirrors its rich GLBT environment. I'm thrilled that Minnesotans have chosen *Lavender* and its advertisers issue after issue since 1995, earning nationwide comments such as 'Minnesota hosts the best regional gay media in the country,' considering the numerous quality publications our peers publish in other states. Kudos to you, Minnesotans, and to *Lavender* for this first 500-slice of gay history!"

CAROLYN LIMA

Chief Financial Officer

Start Date: July 17, 2001

First Issue: 162

Thoughts on 500 Issues:

"I have been around *Lavender* for 13 years. I work with an amazing TEAM of people. Yes, personnel has changed over the years, but, despite everything, this team has never missed a deadline. It's a great and award-winning magazine that comes every two weeks and is distributed to over 900 locations. It is a challenging team effort that has been successful over 500 times. Great work, team, and we will do it another 500 times!"



SUZANNE FARRELL

Senior Account Executive

Start Date: September 1, 2001

First Issue: 165

Thoughts on 500 Issues:

"I'm in awe of working on over 330 issues. Time flies when you are having fun!"



HUBERT BONNET

Creative Director

Start Date: August 16, 2004

First Issue: 241

Thoughts on 500 Issues:

"I am always amazed that with such a small group of people we manage to produce such a quality publication (every two weeks) as *Lavender Magazine*. I think that the freedom, the flexibility, the variety of tasks required for the job, knowing that we are working for a great cause, and the people I work with have kept me motivated all these years. For my 251st issue, I am just as excited as I was for my very first one. On to the next 500."



MIKE HNIDA

Graphic Designer

Start Date: March 25, 2005

First Issue: 257

Thoughts on 500 Issues:

"It's interesting to look at my years with the magazine and try to sum it up, but I can tell that my design and photography skills have grown and I've learned a great deal from others within the industry. What I've appreciated the most about my tenure with *Lavender* is, of course all of the good laughs we've shared, but also the flexibility to use my creativity. Whether that is designing covers or layouts for the magazine, the freedom to flex my creative muscles has been a great opportunity both in the past as well as looking toward the future."



LINDA RAINES

Sales & Advertising Traffic Coordinator and Editorial Assistant

Start Date: November 28, 2005

First Issue: 274

Thoughts on 500 Issues:

"What an amazing accomplishment! I enjoy looking at the copies of the earliest issues of the magazine in our archives, and randomly pulling issues down the line—it really is impressive to see how the quality, size, and content of the magazine has grown and improved over the years. It's also wonderful to see recent covers showing GLBT couples being able to legally marry in the state of Minnesota and also proudly holding their children as families—how far the community has come!"



ANDY LIEN

Managing Editor

Start Date: June 23, 2011

First Issue: 422

Thoughts on 500 Issues:

"I am so very grateful to work for this community, in this state, with these people, doing this work. Pulling together projects that appeal to readers, advertisers, and the general public is an incredible opportunity,



because the community is abundant in both stories and potential. Noting that I've only done 78 issues out of 500 puts the effort into historical and mathematical perspective; then again, I've never liked math. Thank you, everyone."

SHANE LUECK

Editorial Assistant and Contributor

Start Date: February 2, 2012

First Issue: 435

Thoughts on 500 Issues:

"Even in my relatively short time with *Lavender*, I've seen it grow and prosper as the GLBT community gains more visibility. It's been a pleasure to be part of that push forward. I began with a piece discussing Princess Diana and her touring exhibit and I've come so far since then. I can feel myself grow with the magazine and it's a magical feeling."



MICHELLE ULMER

Appointment Setter

Start Date: February 18, 2013

First Issue: 463

Thoughts on 500 Issues:

"Hats off to *Lavender* for being a key resource to the community for so many years!"



ANTON REICHL

Sales & Advertising Account Executive

Start Date: April 7, 2014

First Issue: 494

Thoughts on 500 Issues:

"It's great that *Lavender* has such longevity and influence in not only the GLBT community, but the Twin Cities community as a whole. Congrats!"



ROBERT FELTON

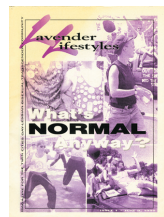
Sales & Advertising Account Executive

Start Date: April 15, 2014

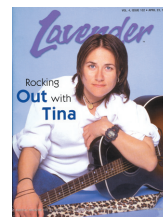
First Issue: 495

Thoughts on 500 Issues:

"I am excited! It is exciting working for a magazine that has seen and reported on so much growth in the wonderful state of Minnesota! I am proud to be part of the *Lavender* family and the 500th Issue."



Issue 1



Issue 102



Issue 161



Issue 257

Friday, June 6, 2014

LAVENDER'S PRIDE KICK-OFF PARTY AT SOLERA



Photo by Sophia Hantzes



Photo by Sophia Hantzes



Photo by Sophia Hantzes



Photo by Sophia Hantzes



Photo by Sophia Hantzes



Photo by Sophia Hantzes



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Friday, June 27, 2014

BEER DABBLER AT PRIDE



Photo by Sophia Hantzes



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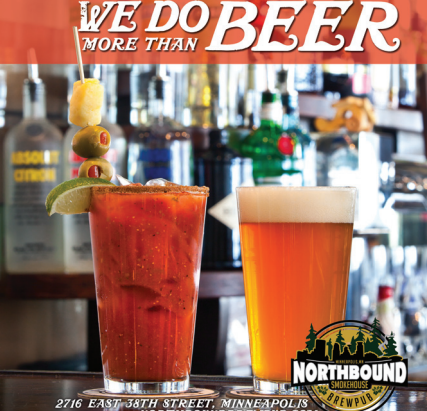
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Sunday, June 29, 2014

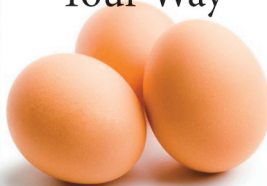
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Thursday, June 26, 2014

MISS CITY OF LAKES PAGEANT AT GAY 90'S

On the evening of June 26, Iman won the Miss City of the Lakes Pageant at the Gay 90's La Femme Show Lounge. Three contestants—Iman, Mercedes Iman (no relation to the new titleholder), and Butterfly Andrews—vied for the coveted crown on the stage resplendent with rainbow colors for GLBT Pride. La Femme Show Director Nina Di Angelo emceed the evening. Perennial local titleholder Geneva Richards, the only female impersonator ever to reign concurrently with the Miss Gay 90's and Miss City of the Lakes titles, stepped down from the latter at the pageant. The June 26 event was the 20th annual Miss City of the Lakes Pageant at the Gay 90's. The pageant debuted at the now-defunct Cloud 9 bar in Minneapolis and subsequently took place at other now-defunct clubs, but the Gay 90's has hosted it since 1995. The next Miss Gay 90's Pageant will be in October around Halloween.



Iman (right) and Nina Di Angelo

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Saturday, June 28, 2014

3RD ANNUAL PRIDE SOUL FRIDAY



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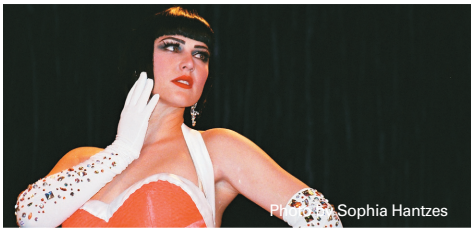


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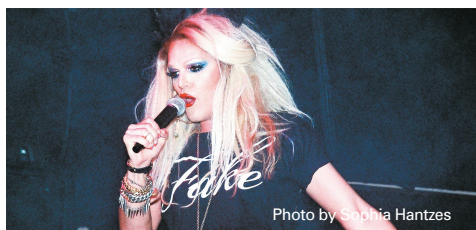


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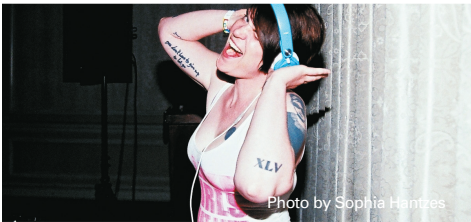


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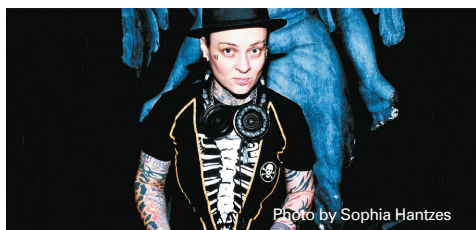


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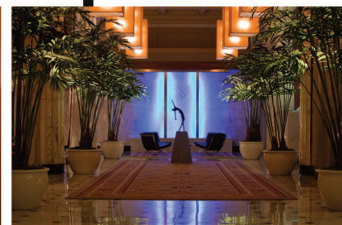
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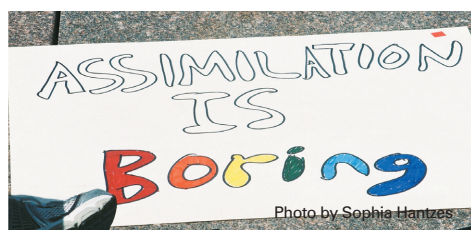
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Friday, June 20, 2014

MINNESOTA LYNX PRIDE NIGHT



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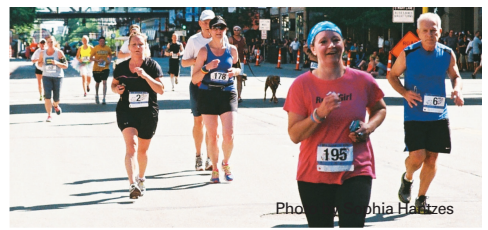


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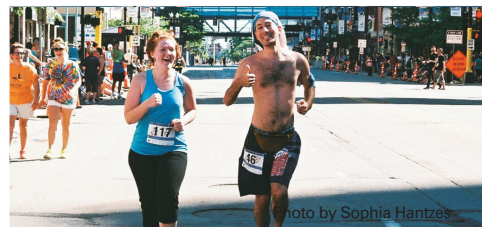


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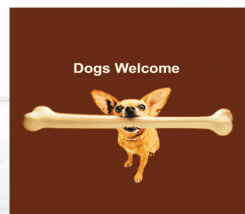
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TWIN CITIES PRIDE FAMILY PICNIC



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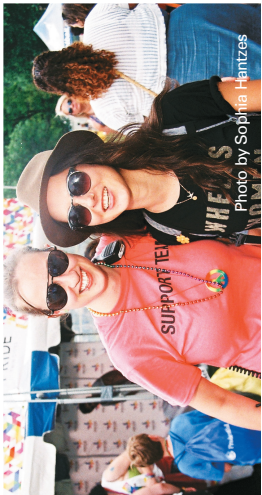


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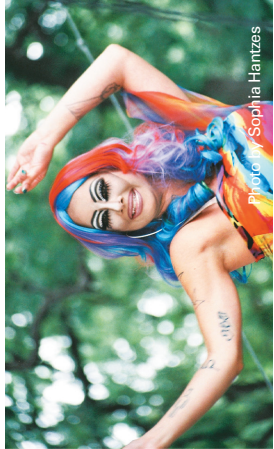


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Saturday, June 28, 2014

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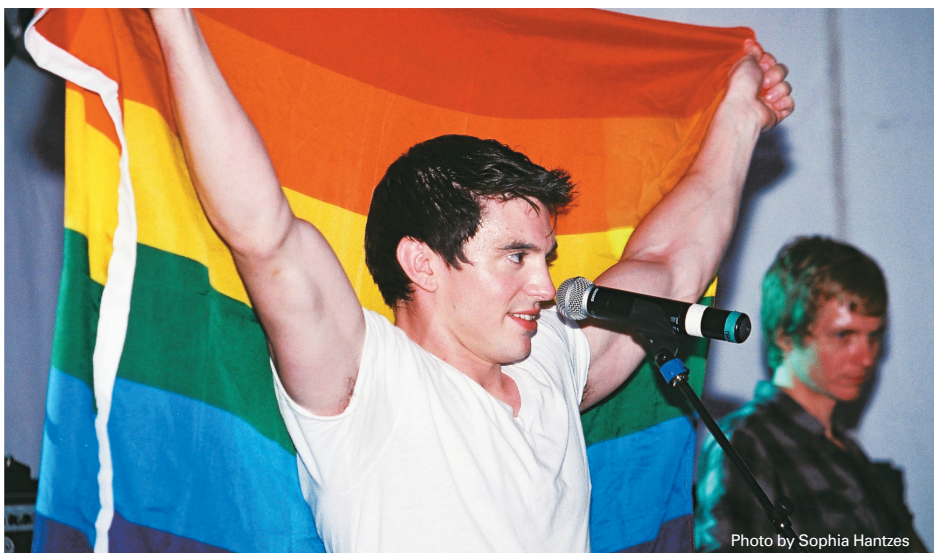


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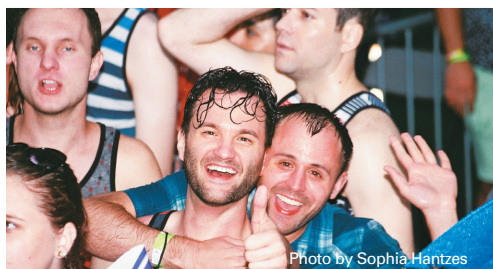


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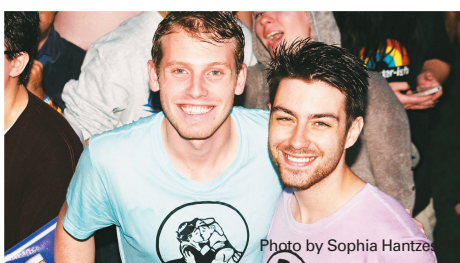


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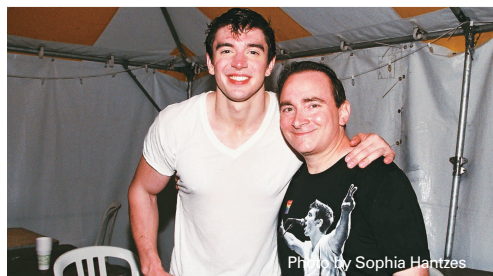


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Sunday, June 29, 2014

ASHLEY RUKES PRIDE PARADE



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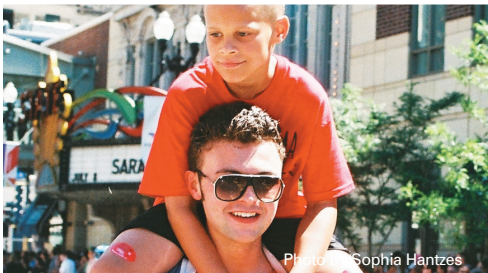
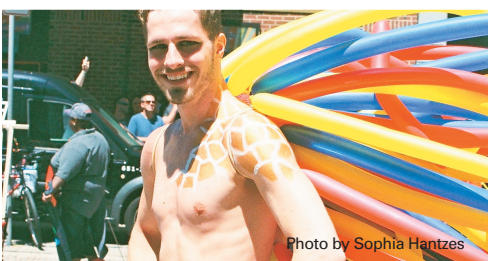
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ASHLEY RUKES PRIDE PARADE



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ASHLEY RUKES PRIDE PARADE



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It Is Just A Small Space After All



The author inside of a 2015 Alfa Romeo 4C. Photo courtesy of Victory & Reseda for Lavender Magazine

Five hundred issues! That is quite the milestone for this magazine.

It is a great magazine for what we do for you. It was not that long ago I was writing about the Bear community on here, by looking back at its roots and where it stood within today's GLBT culture. In the process, I was told how terrible a historian I was. They might have agreed with a few professors back at California State University East Bay, where I squeaked by with a History degree.

Yet, my passion has always been about the

automobile. Our esteemed Managing Editor, Andy Lien, thought well enough to bring me back to this publication to write reviews of the latest and greatest machinery around. She also lets me talk about car sharing, driving with pets onboard, GLBT employee resource groups in the auto industry, and disseminate tips on how to travel by car before throwing anything in the trunk and taking off.

I heard you enjoy this work on here, so I thank you.

Originally, I had planned to review a very

special car for this issue. Unfortunately, I found out that my left leg was not going to manage a screaming yellow \$74,000 convertible. Even if I were physiologically perfect, it would not have made deadline for this huge issue you are reading now.

Instead, I want to talk about us...again. Don't worry, it is just a chat between us—by the pool, of course.

In the course of 500 issues, we saw progress on many fronts. We are in professional sports, the movies, television, high corporate

positions, and in the political arena. We are getting married, raising kids, buying homes, cars, trucks, furnishings, and anything that makes us just like our neighbors. Yet, we still travel, dine well, contribute to the entertainment dollar and are quite philanthropic. If we had not been any of these at the beginning of *Lavender's* run, we have become more so today.

We are quite the demographic, us GLBT folk. Our automotive dollar speaks as loudly as everyone else's. Most of the auto industry gets it. They want to provide us with great transportation choices and to celebrate us as loyal customers.

Some companies do more than others – and that is fine. General Motors has always been on the top of the list for their approach to our community from their employees to their customers to their suppliers. Toyota, Ford, Fiat Chrysler Automobile, Subaru, and Volkswagen still lead in the Human Rights Campaign Corporate Equality Index, as well as serve us as customers when we want something new, and provide us with great after-sales support.

That is not to say that anyone else not scoring a perfect in HRC's survey is not on our side. We have no qualms buying any brand. We also have no qualms choosing a dealer that sells to us in a friendly and respectful manner. We are consumers after all, and we love anything that loves us back.

In this work, I have been fortunate to meet others in the industry that are out and proud in what they do. They range from fellow automotive writers to contacts within the Manufacturers to individuals making the products from

the initial CAD drawing to final inspection at the assembly plant. My interactions with these out colleagues make this work resonate with purpose in the things I do for this publication.

So, frankly, this is not about driving cool cars or having arguments with those who do not support certain brands I write about. Having resonance and purpose is the key to the enjoyment of any job you do. If you can leave a positive mark on the world—even a small one—they will praise you and remember for time onward.

Writers are that way, even more so. We pride ourselves in seeing our bylines anywhere we can; however, we will not be the first to admit it...oh, wait...

Yet, I enjoy the crazy things I do for *Lavender* in the guise of being your automotive columnist. Perhaps I should not call these experiences crazy; unless you count doing a lap on one of the best motorsports venues in the U.S.A. among them. Or, flying down to Texas to drive a vehicle before its arrival onto the showroom floor. Perhaps the best part of all of this is getting the chance to drive everything from city cars to heavy duty pickups to some of the most desirable cars on the planet for the purpose of your readership and discourse.

It is not all about driving. It is equal joy to ride shotgun in a classic and rare 1954 Buick Skylark as it is being thrown around Road America in a Bentley Continental GT Speed by a professional race driver. It is the challenge of putting myself inside vehicles that would suit someone smaller than me. Or, the exposure my ears had when presented with the blast of

a hyper-tuned motor from a heavily modified automobile. Then again, my perfect vehicular soundtrack would be more Italian in note, but that's just me.

All of this was done in the name of *Lavender Magazine*.

In truth, this job is not easy. It is rewarding. It is very exciting.

However, there is a purpose. As a GLBT publication distributed in print to a regional footprint, delivered online via the web and through an app, we have quite the influence to create interest for you, dear reader. As much as we love to travel, tend to our homes, love our pets, speak out for our equality, and try to find the right one to live with forever, we have other interests that would sometimes fall under the radar.

Yet, I always find myself in the company of people who actually have an interest in the automobile. People who are not just true enthusiasts, but are looking for a new vehicle and hope that I have the right answer for them. The interactions I have with you—the readers of *Lavender*—truly make this work completely satisfying. You are interested, engaged, and knowledgeable. I look forward to more conversations along these lines.

And, don't be afraid to write! I love hearing from you!

This "Ride Review" space is a small one, though. And, I, too, enjoy the other parts of this magazine as much as you do. Carla can take us places we could only wish we could pay for. Kathleen tells stories that make us think deeper on the subject. Joy and Pat takes us to the finest in dining that may excite the one we are interested in getting to know better. Jennifer has the right words to get to that person into our lives. John is our eyes on the theater world—one of the finest regional stage communities in this country. Ed has our soundtrack cued up for our listening pleasure. Ethan still incites us to action, while opening our eyes to the best in literature available to us today. Steve still brings us a community that is still active and resonant. Ellen is my friend who shares her life unfiltered for us! Shane is our future, and we need to read him closely. Justin is our eyes and ears on our universe. And, Andy is sage in her observations of the world around us and the wisdom that comes forth in her columns.

Me? I write about cars, trucks, vans, SUVs, crossovers...anything that moves with a motor and a few wheels. Somehow I fit here. Again, I am glad you are reading along here. Besides, I have a lot more to deliver for you, starting with the next issue and on the web.

Therefore, dear readers, "fasten your seatbelts" for more! ■



The author inside 2013 Dodge Dart Limited. Photo courtesy of Victory & Reseda for Lavender Magazine

The “Leather Life” Column: A 500th-issue look back

Wow. Five hundred issues. Who knew?

On June 9, 1995, *Lavender* Magazine was born, and so was this Leather Life column. (The magazine’s original name was *Lavender Lifestyles*; this column’s name for the first ten issues was “LavLife: Leather.”)

Here is how the first installment of this column started:

“Greetings! New magazine, new leather columnist. When the editors of this publication asked me if I was interested in writing a leather column for them, I immediately assured them I was. By the time I hung up the phone, I had recovered my senses, and asked myself, ‘What have I gotten myself into *now*?’ Well, I guess we’ll see.”

Lavender is now up to Issue #500. That means this is a great time to take a look back and see “what I got myself into.”

This column, of course, has changed and evolved since that first issue. Some of the changes were driven by changes to the magazine. Other changes to the column were driven by the growth and evolution of the leather/BDSM/fetish community.

At its start, *Lavender* was printed in black ink on newsprint paper (the magazine’s cover used one more color of ink along with the black). This meant that photographs did not print very well. As *Lavender* added full-color printing to its inside pages, and then upgraded to much better paper, the quality of photographs in the magazine—including photographs in the Leather Life column—increased dramatically. That fact, along with the increasing capabilities of digital cameras, inspired me to take more pictures and include more photos in the column. (Be sure to see the Leather Pride celebration photos, taken by your humble columnist

and others, elsewhere in this issue.)

In *Lavender*’s early issues, the Leather Life column nearly always included a calendar section of upcoming leather events. Increasing digital connectedness (first email lists and websites, then Facebook, Twitter, and other social media) meant that as time went on the column’s event-calendar function lessened, and I could devote more space to other topics.

The frequency of the column’s appearance has changed. After appearing in every issue of the magazine for many years, there was a short period when this column appeared in the magazine on a quarterly basis. Then the frequency of the column’s appearance increased to what it is currently: at least every other issue, and sometimes more often.

The focus of this column started expanding shortly after the column started, and that expansion has continued. The column’s intended audience widened from gay leathermen and leather lesbians to include the pansexual BDSM community and other kinky folks who happened to be bisexual, heterosexual, or trans- or fluid-gendered—of all ages, young to mature. And the column always has been written to be accessible to non-kinky folks as well.

The range of topics covered in this column has expanded from mostly leather to include BDSM and many other alternative sexualities and fetish interests: gear, pony play, puppy play, fire play, blades, tattoos, piercing and other body modifications—to name just a few. (Just when I think I’ve written about every fetish there is, someone comes up with a new one.)

Many kinds of relationships have been discussed in the column, including Master/Slave, Dominant/Submissive, Daddy/Boy, Trainer/Pup, and even, finally—hurrah and hallelu-

jah—marriage.

Some topics that the column dealt with in the early issues are still part of the column today: Pride, both leather and GLBT (and, increasingly, GLBTA, to include our proud allies); leather/BDSM/fetish clubs and organizations; club runs and parties; and leather contests and titleholders, both local and international. Fortunately, there is one topic appearing less often today than in the early days of the column: obituaries.

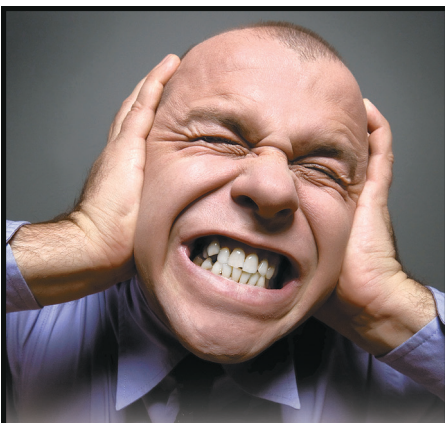
How has your humble columnist changed? I am 500 issues older, I am grayer, and I am becoming a bit of a curmudgeon (although not as curmudgeonly as my former leather journalism colleague Robert Davolt, blessed be his memory).

So, what did I get myself into? A recurring spot in a really great magazine (both print and online); membership in several really great communities; and a really interesting, amazing—and long-running—ride of a lifetime. Cue the Sondheim music: “I’m Still Here.” And the ride isn’t over yet.

(Now for the inevitable, shameless commercial plug: many of the articles that have been part of this column have been collected in my book, *Life, Leather and the Pursuit of Happiness*. Published in 2010, the book is available in print and e-book versions.)

Five-hundredth-issue thank-yous go to all the people at *Lavender* over the years who have kept the magazine going and allowed it to reach this milestone, to everyone who has ever been written about in the column, and to everyone who has been a part of the leather/BDSM/fetish and GLBT communities, the communities that have given me so much to write about.

Finally, to my reading audience, in both print and digital forms: thanks for reading! ■



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Hypocrite

"Excuse me Miss; which way is the Convention Center?"

The man had stopped me on an empty street in downtown Minneapolis on a Friday evening after work. The stranger, whom I quickly guessed was early fifty-something, was dressed in a blue polo shirt and carrying a large umbrella. He had an expensive-looking watch on his wrist.

He was also African American.

I was happy to oblige. I gave directions to the Convention Center and even walked him twenty feet to a corner and pointed. "It's that large red building past the third traffic light," I said.

The man expressed his appreciation and then offered, "You're quite friendly. I've been walking around here for an hour and twenty minutes and all I've met are rude people. Even police officers and city officials were rude when I asked for directions."

I wondered why he brought up police officers, but I let the comment pass.

I next heard, "You don't seem like you're a Minnesotan. Where are you from?"

Without thinking, I replied, "Iowa."

"Hawkeye or Cyclone?"

"Hawkeye," I answered.

He put out his hand. "My name is Randall," he said.

Once more, I instinctively reacted and shook the man's hand. "I'm Ellie."

With that, a request for directions had turned into a conversation, something that was starting to feel both awkward and uncomfortable.

Randall related that he had a bachelor's degree in something I now can't recall and that he was in town from Los Angeles. "Back there, people are very friendly," he said. He went on. "I've heard about that Minnesota nice thing, but I don't think it's true. Not with the people that I've run into here."

For a second, I considered explaining that "Minnesota nice" actually means quite the opposite of "nice," but dropped the thought. That uncomfortable gut feeling was getting stronger and I wanted the conversation to end. Still, I didn't want to be one more rude person to add to this man's list.

"I've been here for six days," Randall said.

Oh, I thought. *Now I get it.*

With that, a huge alarm bell went off in my head. In a microsecond, I added everything up: stopped on the street; overly friendly; offering his name and wanting mine; a handshake; and now hearing about how long he's been in a city that's nothing like back home. I've been here countless times before being panhandled for bus money out of town back to someplace else.

Two and a half minutes after being approached, I reacted.

"Please don't ask me for money," I blurted.

In response, I saw something totally unexpected. Disgust. Pure and

plain disgust.

With me.

"I don't want your money," Randall shot back. "I've got my own damn money," he near yelled as he turned and walked away.

At that moment, something else flashed through me: *shame*. Instantly I understood this man wasn't panhandling at all. No, he was simply an out-of-towner looking for someone to talk to. Someone to be nice to him.

By the time I realized this, I was already walking in the opposite direction. It was too late to do anything about what was clearly a colossal mistake on my part.

All of this would have been fairly understandable in my mind but for one thing: at noon on that very day, I had stood in front of twenty-five court system people and talked about what it means to be transgender. I spoke about how loneliness is often an outcome of transitioning genders—many trans people lose loved ones and friends because people still don't understand.

Most importantly, I talked about needing to "go into the grey" where we stop labeling people and instead see one another for exactly what we are: humans. I related that trans people are among the most grey people you'll find. For folks who think only in black and white, it's difficult to relate to a trans person.

"The grey is a bumpy place," I said. "People different than ourselves make us uncomfortable."

Yet, we have to get past the discomfort and be kind to each other," I lectured, as if I was some kind of self-appointed expert on the human condition.

Six hours later, I wasn't an expert at all. Instead, I was a hypocrite.

When confronted with the unexpected, I did exactly the opposite of what I've been telling audiences for months: I resorted to black-and-white thinking and thought only of Randall as a panhandler. I labelled him without giving it a second thought.

In doing so, I totally overlooked the fact that Randall was simply a human, reaching out to another human, doing precisely what I've told thousands of people to do.

And the great Ellie Krug couldn't even recognize it.

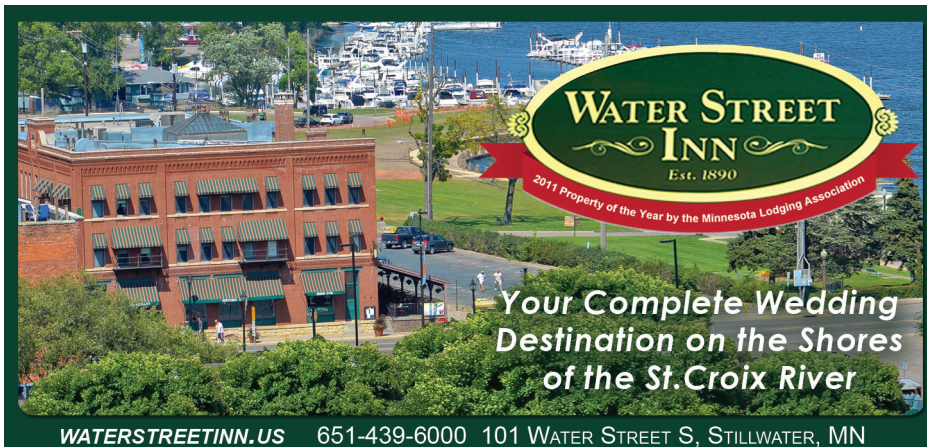
The shame got worse as I drove toward home. Twenty minutes after my life lesson in humanity, I turned the car around and headed back downtown. I drove from corner to corner, looking for the black man in a blue polo shirt with umbrella.

I wanted to apologize, to tell Randall that I'm really a better human than I appeared. Maybe I'd even suggest we get a drink or coffee.

I never found him.

It was a lesson I'll never forget.

Or so this hypocrite hopes. ■



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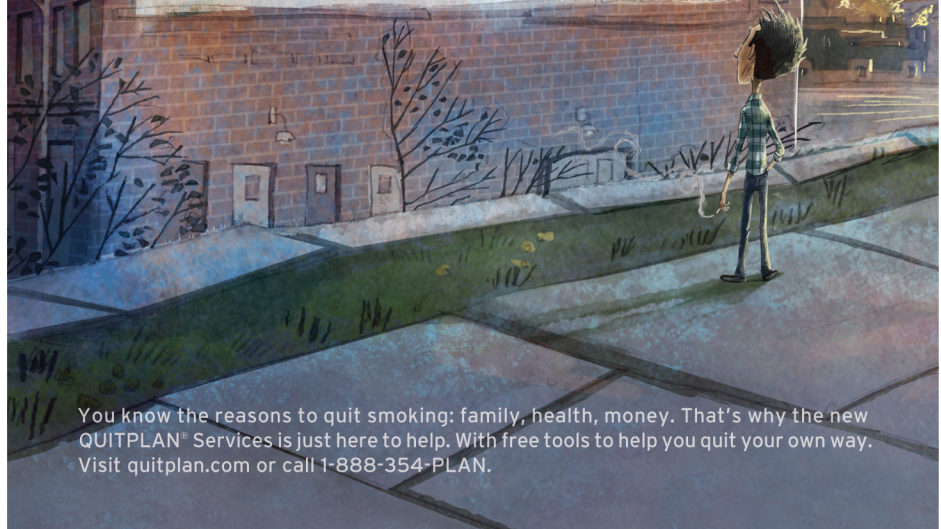
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Outdoor Adventures

Yesterday, I signed up for a weekend wilderness retreat for women. It takes place in October and allows you to select a bunch of activities designed to deepen your appreciation for nature. I registered for five classes, including a bird watching class! I've long suspected that the birds in my backyard are plotting some type of conspiracy against me. And I want to keep tabs on their scheming.

"You're an idiot," my girlfriend responded when I told her that I signed us up for the retreat. "Last year you dragged me to Alaska. And now this."

"But it's only \$200 for five activities!" I trilled.

"That just proves how stupid lesbians are," she said. "They force you to spend the weekend in nature and then they under-charge for it. Can't we just take the money and buy a decent bottle of champagne and skip the nature nonsense? The cavemen lived outdoors and look what happened to them."

"I don't think it's being organized by lesbians," I said, studying the website. "See, 'woman' is spelled in the regular way and not with a 'y.'"

My girlfriend rolled her eyes and pointed at a picture on the website. "There's a drumming circle. It's a bunch of dykes, you imbecile."

"But Jesse sent us the invitation, and she's straight," I explained.

"Jesse is gayer than you are," she said with a sigh. "Just because she hasn't slept with a woman doesn't mean a thing. She's obsessed with you; she has season tickets to hockey games; and she's a vegetarian."

I squinted my eyes and studied the photos of the women on the retreat's website. They were clad in lesbian-like fashions from L.L. Bean and Farm and Fleet. They seemed manically happy in each other's company and there wasn't a man in sight.

"It really is getting harder to tell who's a lesbian and who's straight,"

I said. "Remember back in the day when a straight woman went to great lengths to avoid looking gay? I remember this big, mannish girl from Northern Minnesota. She was built like a refrigerator box. Nothing girly about her. Yet she insisted on dressing in pink and pearls just to telegraph the fact that she was straight. I didn't realize you could wear pastels aggressively until I saw her lumbering down the street in Easter-egg colored culottes."

"Yes, well now it's cool to be a lesbian," she said. She emphasized the word 'cool' in the fashion of those anti-drug films we were forced to watch in 7th grade health class. "Everyone wants to be one. I blame Ellen Degeneres. They think there's nothing more to being a lesbian than dancing around like a fool and wearing sneakers with dress slacks."

"How have you become so bitter? You used to love lesbians," I said. "You've certainly slept with enough of them. (She was a musician in the late 1980s. 'Nuff said.) I'd think you'd celebrate the fact that straight women want to embrace us."

"But they're embracing the things I don't like about lesbians," she said. "The outdoorsy stuff. The endless droning on about sisterhood. The mournful folk ballads. The bad haircuts. They don't want to do what's really awesome about being a lesbian—which is the sex part. They just want to co-opt our freedom and not have sex with their husbands."

"Well, there is still something straight women do better than lesbians," I said, pointing at the website. The outdoor retreat will be taking place on the grounds of a luxury resort and spa. There is time devoted to facials and massages.

"We don't have to campout? Pampering is a required activity?" my girlfriend exclaimed. "I stand corrected! This thing is being run by straight women. OK, sign me up." ■



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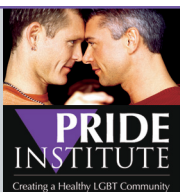
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www.hennepinchurch.org

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United Methodist Reconciling Churches

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www.mnrcumc.org

Westminster Presbyterian Church

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www.westminsternpls.org

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www.minneapolismoviebears.com

SPORTS & RECREATION

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Dandelion

The Milky Way was real and dizzying and fantastic. Good luck counting the stars. They aren't as lonely as those above Aunt Sandy's.

You told me that I belonged up there somewhere, to shine among them, I said you'd shine brighter, and you said, "horse shit."

We stared at the sky and at each other, for the first time not playing or thinking or loving. Meditation for adolescents, we'd call it.

And a godlike voice echoes through the heavens:

"Justin, what the hell are you doing?"

The stars rearrange to form the face of Mr. Dingle, a sadistic science teacher as wide as he is tall; the rest of the universe dissolves into his seventh grade Introduction to Astronomy class. Inside my textbook is a leaf of notebook paper on which I've written the text above—a love letter to Joshua, who sits at the front of the class and has pretty yellow hair and wears too much cologne.

Mr. Dingle snatches my letter, which I've thankfully left unaddressed, and looks down at it through the eyeglasses at the end of his nose. He smells like moth balls and Old Spice and has the voice of someone with an incessant need to clear his throat.

"Mr. Jones," he addresses the class as he walks with my letter to the front of the room. My pulse quickens. "Mr. Jones has written a letter I'd like him to read aloud."

Mr. Dingle—*stupid name*—takes off his glasses and throws them on his messy desk. He looks at me, almost licking his lips over thoughts of my impending torture. He sits on the edge of his desk and crosses his legs into an awkward position that almost causes him to fall. He retries, fails, and decides to stand.

"Mr. Jones, please humor us." He waves

my letter through the air. "Or should I read it?" He's holding the paper in the wrong place for the dramatic effect he's after, too far off to the side. It folds in on itself when the wind is against it. I imagine he thinks his presentation is smoother than it looks.

My ears start burning and my stomach knots. My classmates stare at me. To them, I am the quiet and strange nerd, too awkward to befriend and too bad at science to cheat from. But they don't know me. They don't understand. I'm not a nerd and I'm not quiet. At least not inside my head. I'm a romantic, a secret admirer, a busy seeker of things they're too immature to know exist.

I want to say something witty or even obscene to Mr. Dingle, to put the class on my side, but I'm already stuttering and I haven't said anything. I can't be here. My palms are sweaty. My lower lip quivers and my eyes start watering. I can't catch my breath and I want to die.

I look at Joshua. He stares at me with the rest of the class and shares their anticipation. *What will the quiet and strange boy do?*

I stand up from my chair. The world is spinning. I can barely see through my tears. I have no idea what I'm going to do, or what I should be doing. I want to scream, but that would be too strange. I want to curse at Mr. Dingle but I'm flustered and have no ammunition. So I run.

I run into the hall and past the lockers. I run outside and through patches of dandelions. I run to the "huts"—what we call classroom trailers used for overflow—and slide into the dirt behind one, watching sand swirl up into my wake.

I've just confirmed to my peers that I'm not

only quiet and strange, but downright weird. Word will spread quickly about "that kid in science class" who literally stood up to, but ultimately ran away—crying—from Mr. Astro Dick. I've squashed my chances at friendship and will accept the mantle of punching bag du jour.

Out here is where I belong. In the weeds, by the huts. I'm social poison, a prepubescent pariah, something to be kept from "normal" adolescence. I'm different, and not in a good way. I'm shy. I'm queer.

I feel my cheeks burning. I'm so angry I'm hopeless. I fold my legs under me, crying, digging my fingers into the dirt, looking around me and hating everything I see: stupid huts, stupid school, stupid trees, stupid ground, stupid...dandelions? I spot a cluster of them nearby, maybe half a dozen, and scan the rest of the landscape for more. They're everywhere—hundreds, maybe thousands—far more than I've ever noticed. Our school can barely afford electricity, let alone ground maintenance, so dandelions, queers of the plant world, are left on their own. They're gorgeous en masse. To me, anyway.

"JUSTIN JONES," says the school-wide intercom. My name comes with an almost obnoxious amount of background static, as if someone's blowing into the mic. "Report to the principal's office immediately." Whatever.

I lean back and snap up a mature dandelion, one past yellow. It's covered in feathery seeds, several dozen or more, each one vulnerable to the elements but indelicate, strong enough not only to survive, but to persist. To thrive. To grow.

I purse my lips, take a deep breath, and blow it all away. ■

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